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ABSTRACT

The Portland (Oregon) Public Schools Research and Evaluation Department is investigating the use of evaluative data in instructional planning and decision making in schools. The three-year research effort involves training and technical support in effective evaluation use. The first year of the evaluation use research focused on collecting and analyzing baseline data on the use of Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT). Interviews and surveys gathered information from parents, teachers, principals, and directors of instrumentation on how these actors use evaluative data in instructional planning and decision-making. Recommendations from the first-year study include: (1) revision of parent conference report forms to include numeric and graphic test score summaries; (2) revision of the parent guide to understanding test scores; (3) institution of a spring parent conference report to include fall and spring PALT scores; (4) evaluation of the grade 3 testing program, revised on the basis of teacher interviews and surveys; (5) development of training materials to help teachers prepare students; and (6) development of inservice training for test coordinators and others interested in test interpretation and the use of results. Summary results of surveys of parents and teachers are appended. (TJH)

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1986-87
RESEARCH
REPORT

THE USE OF EVALUATIVE DATA FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

IN THE PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Year One Report: July 1986-August 1987

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October, 1987

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THE USE OF EVALUATIVE DATA

FOR

INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING

IN THE

PORTLAND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Year One Report: July 1986 - August 1987

Research, Evaluation and Testing Department
Portland Public Schools
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ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

THE USE OF EVALUATIVE DATA FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING: A RESEARCH STUDY 1986-87

The Portland Public Schools Research and Evaluation Department is investigating the use of evaluative data in instructional planning and decision making in schools. The three year research effort developed from the department's commitment to improve evaluative data use at all levels of the decision making process.

The assumption of the research is that the purpose of evaluation is to inform decision making. Effective evaluation use should result in better instructional decisions for students. Improved decision making should result in increased achievement, more efficient use of school resources and greater satisfaction on the part of students, parents, teachers and principals.

This research and development effort will assist the district to enhance the use of evaluation. Training and technical support in effective evaluation use will be developed based on stated needs of participants and findings from the research.

The first year of the evaluation use research focused on collecting and analyzing baseline data on the use of Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT) in the district. Interviews and surveys gathered information from parents, teachers, principals, and Directors of Instruction on how these actors use evaluative data in instructional planning and decision making.

Recommendations from the first year of the study include:

1. The R&E Department should revise the Parent Conference Report. Consideration should be given to including numeric and graphic test score summaries. A revised Parent Guide to understanding test scores should accompany the report.
2. The R&E Department should institute a Spring Parent Conference Report, including fall and spring PALT test scores. The report could be mailed to parents with the Parent Guide to testing.
3. Based on early findings from teacher interviews and surveys, the R&E Department revised the grade 3 testing program. Program implementation and changes should be evaluated.
4. The R&E Department should consider developing training materials/packages to help teachers prepare students for testing. Interviews identified this area as a priority interest of teachers and principals.
5. The R&E Department should consider developing inservice training for test coordinators or others interested in test interpretation and use of test results.

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THE USE OF EVALUATIVE DATA FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING IN SCHOOLS: YEAR ONE REPORT
July 1986 - August 1987

INTRODUCTION

The major purpose of achievement testing in schools is to inform educational decisions. Toward this end, testing and the subsequent reporting of student outcomes, have been a long-standing tradition in schools. While schools recognize the need for a close fit between curriculum and testing, in practice, they often don't use test results to improve instructional decisions. Thus, evaluation use may vary widely with the interest and experience of the user.

In 1986, the Research and Evaluation Department in Portland Public Schools began a district-wide study to examine evaluation use in schools. This research has the following objectives:

1) to provide information on the extent to which evaluation data are used by principals and teachers in instructional planning and decision making, and

2) to develop improved reporting and support systems, including the development of training materials to improve evaluation use at classroom and building level.

The research assumes that the goal of evaluation is to inform decision making. The effective use of evaluation should result in better decisions about what to teach, who to teach, and how to teach. Improved decisions should result in increased achievement, more efficient use of school resources and greater satisfaction on the part of students, parents, teachers and principals.

This report summarizes research for the first year of the decision making study. The report is intended for use by the Director of Research and Evaluation and Evaluation Department staff as an aid in improving the structure and operation of the testing program and developing improved technical support for the Portland Public Schools. It is expected to also be of interest to district

administrators, school board members, and researchers with an interest in evaluation use and its impact on educational practice.

RESEARCH PLAN/QUESTIONS

This research will collect information on the following questions:

1. What is the decision making process for instructional planning in schools?
2. How do schools use evaluative report data in instructional planning and decision making?
3. What is the level of use of evaluation data in instructional planning and decision making in the Portland Public Schools?
4. What is the relationship between student achievement and evaluation use?
5. How can measurement and evaluation most effectively serve the decision making needs of parents, teachers, principals, Directors of Instruction, and central office staff?

The research and development process began in the summer of 1986 and will continue over a three year period. It should result in improved reporting and delivery systems for Portland Achievement Levels Test (PALT) data, including training and support in evaluation use to improve instructional decision making. The study consists of four phases of activity: 1) conducting the evaluation use study, 2) developing training materials, 3) training in evaluation use, and 4) follow-up.

Evaluation Use Study

The evaluation use study consists of three parts - surveys on evaluation use, focused interviews on the use of evaluation reports, and case studies of the use of evaluation in schools.

In fall 1986, elementary school principals and teachers participated in surveys on evaluation data use in instructional planning. Parents were surveyed on their use of achievement data in the Parent-Teacher Conference Report. Focused interviews were conducted with 126 teachers, principals, and administrators. The data have already begun to be used in Departmental planning.

In fall 1987, we'll conduct in-depth case studies to document the types of decisions made based on evaluation data at classroom and building level. This activity will develop a description of the decision process and informational needs at different levels in the system. The knowledge gained through this process will help the Research and Evaluation staff develop a richer understanding of uses of and needs for evaluative data including, but not limited to, Portland Achievement Levels Tests (PALT) data.

Development of Training/Support Materials

Research findings will guide the development of a series of training modules and other support materials for principals and teachers on effective evaluation use. First modules will be aimed at awareness; later modules will be targeted to meet stated needs of teachers and administrators. Material formats may include newsletters, packaged materials, and inservice presentations.

Training

Training or training packages will be provided to a select group of principals and teachers who participated in the evaluation use study. Participants will be randomly reassigned to two equal sized groups; one group will receive training and one group will not. This phase of the study will continue through 1989 as new materials are developed.

Follow-up, evaluation and monitoring

As training is conducted, data will be collected from the treatment and no-treatment groups on: 1) value/effectiveness of the training, 2) changes in job satisfaction, and 3) student achievement. This information will be used to improve the training materials, delivery system and reporting process.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

Evaluation use for instructional decision making is a highly complex process. Two key factors which affect evaluation use in schools are the individuals' proficiency in evaluation and their attitude or predisposition toward using evaluation information (Pechman and King, 1984). Principals and teachers bring a variety of prior knowledge to their instructional decisions (Alkin, Daillak, and White, 1980). Many have limited experience with evaluation and rely instead on informal assessments or teacher judgement for decision making. Teachers and principals with limited experience in using data often need to gain awareness of evaluation and its role in instructional decision making.

Understanding how teachers respond to change efforts in schools has been the research focus of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) (Hall, Wallace, and Dossett, 1973). The model suggests that as individuals are introduced to an innovation, they pass through predictable stages in attitude and behavior. The stages indicate developmental movement from awareness, personal, management, consequence, collaboration, to refocusing in new directions.

Though the Concerns-Based Adoption Model is well accepted in change process literature, it has received limited use in research on evaluation use. Pechman and King (1986) used the CBAM levels of use framework to define the structure of school evaluation use (SSEU). Hall (1982) proposed a preliminary list of key components for evaluation use as an innovation. The purpose of sub-study 1, reported below, was to test the levels of use hypothesized in the CBAM, specifically the level of use of evaluation reports in Portland Public Schools. Sub-study 2 expanded on this with descriptive information on the use of evaluation and validation of the findings of the first study. Sub-studies 3 and 4 evolved from the earlier studies in an effort to better understand and explain the interview and survey results.

METHODOLOGY

The 1986-87 evaluation use research utilized four sub-studies:

1) Levels of Use interviews on the use of evaluation test reports,
2) Surveys of principals and teachers on evaluation use,
3) Survey of parents on the Parent-Conference Report, and
4) Telephone survey of grade 3 teachers on the testing program.

A random sample of teachers and principals in 80 elementary schools participated in studies 1 and 2. The methodology and findings of the 1986-87 evaluation use studies are presented here.

Sub-Study 1 - Levels of Use

Subjects

Levels of Use (LoU) interviews were conducted with 126 district staff across all clusters by nine certified LoU interviewers. Eight Directors of Instruction, 82 teachers (grades 3-8), and 36 principals participated in interviews focused on use of PALT evaluation reports. Subjects were randomly selected from 45 elementary schools in the district. Subjects varied in years of experience in their position (one to twenty-five years) and the amount of evaluation experience (nonuser to evaluation specialist).

Measure

In order to determine a baseline measure of use of evaluation reports in the district, the researchers used the Levels of Use of an Innovation methodology. The Levels of Use (LoU) model was developed by Gene Hall and Susan Loucks at the Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas-Austin. The model identifies eight levels of use: nonuse, orientation, preparation, mechanical use, routine, refinement, integration, and renewal (Appendix A). Figure 1 outlines the levels of use and related behavioral characteristics as defined in the evaluation use study. The LoU model has been used successfully to study evaluation use in other school districts (Pechman and King, 1986).

FIGURE 1.

LEVELS OF USE AND BEHAVIORAL DEFINITIONS

Level of Use	Behavioral Definition of Evaluation Use
0 NONUSE	User has little or no knowledge of evaluation reports and no involvement with reports.
I ORIENTATION	User has recently acquired information about evaluation reports or is exploring its value and its demands upon the user and user system.
II PREPARATION	User is preparing for first use of evaluation reports.
III MECHANICAL USE	User focuses on short term use of evaluation reports with little refection. Changes in use are made to meet user needs. User is engaged in a step-by-step attempt to master the task of using evaluation reports, often resulting in disjointed and superficial use.
IVA ROUTINE	Stable use of evaluation reports. Few changes are made in use. Little thought is given to improving evaluation use or its consequences.
IVB REFINEMENT	User varies the use of evaluation reports to increase impact on students. Variations are based on knowledge of both short and long-term consequences for students.
V INTEGRATION	User combines own efforts to use evaluation reports with activities of colleagues to achieve a collective impact on students.
VI RENEWAL	User reevaluates the quality of evaluation reports, seeks major modifications or alternatives to current reports to increase student impact, examines new developments in the field, and goal for self or the system.

Procedure

To measure Levels of Use, focused interviews were conducted. Interviewees were asked a series of branching interview questions and follow-up probes. Interviews took approximately twenty minutes and appeared to be informal conversations about how the principal or teacher is using evaluation reports. The LoU interview protocol

is generic; it can describe different innovations by changing the point of reference. For our purpose, the innovation was use of Portland Achievement Levels Test (PALT) evaluation reports, specifically student achievement or administrative reports.

The LoU interviews were tape recorded and the resultant tapes were rated for reliability by trained interviewer/raters. Two raters listened to each tape and independently categorized the interviewee according to Level of Use of evaluation. If the two raters did not agree on the LoU, the tape was listened to by a third rater. Overall LoU was determined when two raters agreed on the rating.

Of the total 126 LoU tapes, 106 or 84% were agreed on by the first two raters. Of the remaining 20 tapes, 16 or 13% were classified by the third rater. Only 4 or 3% required a fourth rater for a final rating. Inter-rater reliability ranged from .82 to .98 on the overall Level of Use.

This research views the individual teacher or principal as the primary unit of evaluation use. The secondary unit of evaluation use is the school. The individual user is also the primary unit of analysis. Experience demonstrates that asking more removed sources (e.g., D.O.I.s, superintendents) about the use or nonuse of innovation by their staff is questionable. The only way to know if, and how, an innovation is being used is to directly assess each individual's use. The Levels of Use method allows us to focus on what individuals are <u>doing</u> in relation to using evaluative data.

<u>Results</u>

Figure 2 summarizes the Levels of Use of PALT reports. Figure 3 presents the Levels of Evaluation Use of Portland teachers and administrators during 1986-87. The LoU process found that overall 88% of the Directors of Instruction (DOIs), 97% of principals, and 85% of teachers were users of PALT evaluation reports. We found seven percent of the sample to be nonusers of PALT evaluation data.

Figure 2. Levels of Use

Use of PALT Evaluation Reports (N=126)

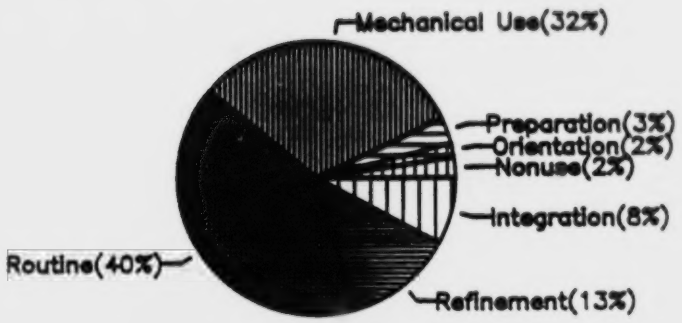
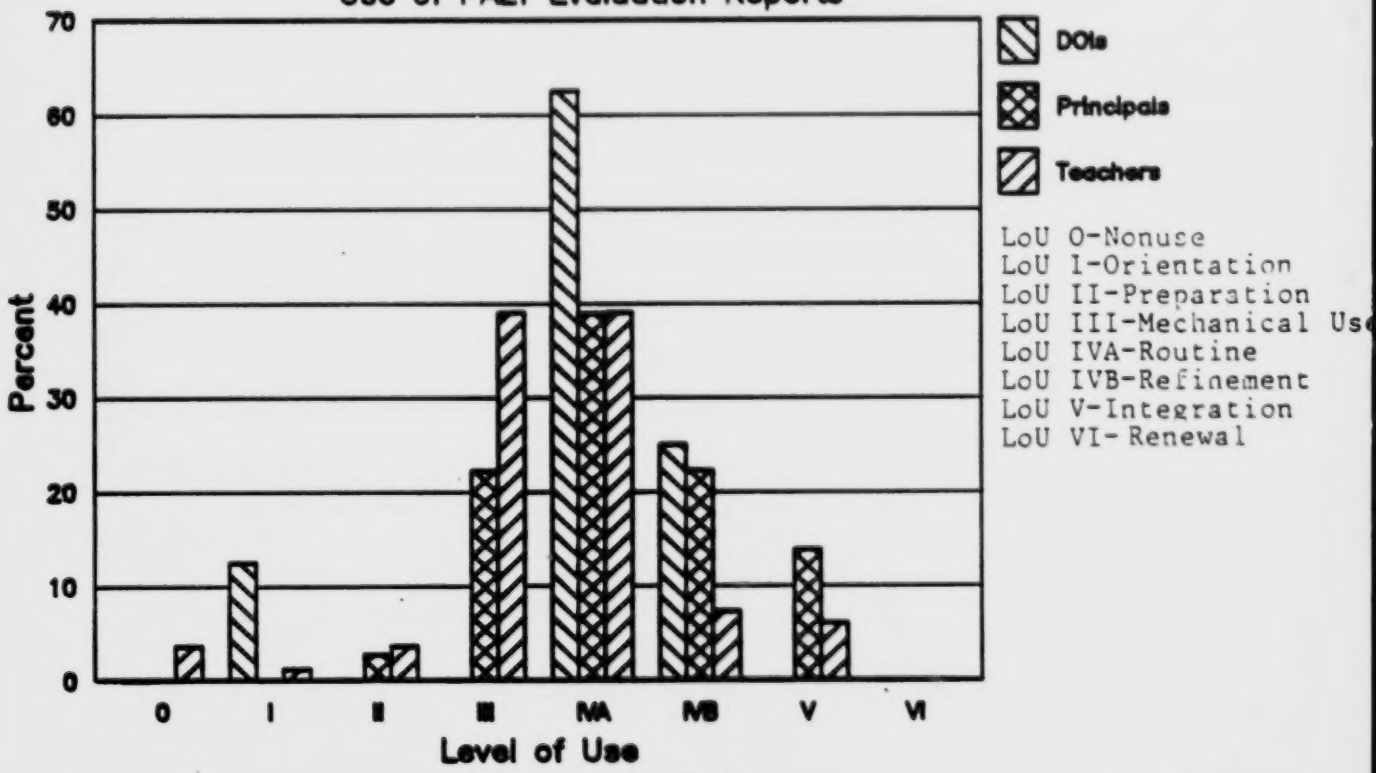


Figure 3. Level of Use by School Role

Use of PALT Evaluation Reports



Among individual users, 32% are Mechanical Users of PALT evaluation reports. This group needs additional training/support in the use and interpretation of test reports. The largest group, 40% of the sample, were identified as Routine Users of evaluation reports. This is solid, stable comfortable use of PALT information. Routine use is what we want people to achieve as knowledgeable users. The interviews also identified a group of "enhanced users", individuals at Refinement (Lou IVB), Integration (LoU V) or Renewal (LoU VI). The "enhanced users", 21% of the sample, are comfortable with using PALT reports and often make refinements to increase student impact. Principals were more likely to be higher level users of PALT reports than teachers. While 36% of the principals are "enhanced users" of the reports, only 13% of teachers are among this group.

Analysis of LoU in 34 school buildings which had at least three individual LoU ratings, indicated that 10 schools or 29% are using PALT reports at a Mechanical Use level, 11 or 32% are using evaluative data at Routine level, and only 2 or 6% are "enhanced" users of PALT evaluation reports.

The authors hypothesized a positive relationship between level of use of evaluative data and increased student achievement. We expected different student outcomes at different levels of use. For example, Mechanical Users (LoU III) are struggling with logistics and management problems associated with new use of evaluation reports. Higher level users, those at Refinement (LoU IVB), are adapting their use of evaluation reports to increase student impact. Mechanical users would have less effect on student achievement than Routine users and Refinement users would likely have more positive results than either Mechanical or Routine users. If this hypothesis held, there would be an increasing relationship between level of evaluation use and student achievement.

A variety of statistical procedures were used to explore the relationship between level of use of PALT data within a building

and student achievement. Although some relationships were observable within schools and grade groupings, no significant correlations were obtained. The exploratory analysis of student achievement suggests that the relationship is not predicated on the defined level of use, but may lie more directly in how the data are actually used in decision making. Further evidence for this will be sought in the case studies.

Sub-study 2 - Principal and Teacher Surveys

Subjects

In November 1986, survey questionnaires were sent to a random sample of principals and teachers in 40 elementary schools. Surveys were completed by 35 principals and 239 teachers on their use of evaluative data in instructional decision making.

Measure

A Principal Survey and Teacher Survey (Appendix B) were developed to determine what kind of evaluation data are used by teachers and principals. The major questions the surveys asked were: 1) which PALT evaluation reports do you use to assist you in instructional decision making situations and 2) what test scores do you use in decision making situations. The surveys also asked about the use and usefulness of the current PALT reporting system, how test reports are used, and what other sources of evaluative information are used in instructional decision making.

Procedure

The surveys were mailed to a fifty percent random sample of principals and teachers in November 1986. A cover letter describing the study and a preaddressed return envelope were included in the mailing. The survey response rate was 88% for principals and 84% for teachers after one follow-up mailing.

Results

Survey results were analyzed to determine what PALT evaluation reports are used, the extent to which RIT and P-scores are used,

and how test scores are used in decision making situations by principals and teachers. Frequency tables for the major survey questions are presented in Appendix B.

What PALT evaluation reports do principals and teachers use for instructional planning and decision making?

Table 1 displays frequencies of use of the PALT student achievement reports by principals and teachers. The results indicate that principals and teachers use evaluative data differently. More than half of the sample say they use five of the six achievement reports "almost always" or "often". Principals use the evaluation reports more frequently than teachers. Principals indicate they use the Fall-Spring Match report, Grade Goal Progress report, Student-Class Alpha report, and Labels for Cum Folder most frequently. Sixty-six percent of teachers use the Parent-Teacher Conference report almost always. Teachers and Principals use Test Score Cards least often. Sixty percent of the teachers sampled report almost always or often using the Student Goal Report-Class Alpha.

TABLE 1.
Frequency of Use of Achievement Reports

PALT Achievement Reports	School Role	N	Almost Always	Often	Some-times	Seldom	Almost Never
Labels for Cum. Folder	Principal	30	70.0	3.3	20.0	6.7	
	Teacher	196	40.8	11.7	15.8	8.7	23.0
Parent-Teacher Conference Rpt.	Principal	32	62.5	3.1	15.6	12.5	6.3
	Teacher	225	66.2	16.4	8.9	2.2	6.2
Fall Spring Match Report	Principal	32	59.4	25.0	12.5		3.1
	Teacher	200	42.5	26.5	18.0	3.5	9.5
Student Goal Class Alpha	Principal	34	44.1	32.4	20.6		2.9
	Teacher	218	32.6	27.5	24.8	6.9	8.3
Grade Goal Progress	Principal	32	53.1	34.4	6.3	3.1	3.1
	Teacher	52	26.4	23.9	27.9	8.1	13.7
Test Score Cards	Principal	28	17.9	14.2	32.1	17.9	17.9
	Teacher	182	20.9	19.2	20.9	14.8	24.2

In the use of PALT administrative reports, 53% of principals use the Grade Goal Progress Report almost always. Principals least often use Board Report on Goal 2. Principals (33%) seldom or never use Achievement Report by Ethnic Group, Achievement Profiles, or Board Reports 1 & 2.

What test scores types (RIT or P-score) do teachers and principals use in decision making situations?

Teachers and principals were asked what test scores they use in several decision making situations, including goal setting, student placement, curriculum evaluation, and parent/teacher communication.

In setting instructional goals, teachers use P-scores[1], but principals prefer RIT[2] scores. Surprisingly, and of concern, we learned that 20% of principals and teachers don't think test scores are applicable to the instructional goal setting process.

Regarding student placement/regrouping for instruction, both principals and teachers use RIT and P-scores in student placement. Seventy-four percent of the principals report using RIT & P-score for placement. Twenty-six percent of teachers rely on P-scores to help with placing students compared to 11% who use RIT scores. In evaluating curriculum, 28% of principals use RIT scores, while only 10% of teachers use RITs in this decision making situation.

The types of test scores used in communicating with teachers and parents is a highly charged area. Principals find P-scores more appropriate in talking with parents and staff. Forty-five percent of principals use RIT and P-scores in communicating with teacher.

1 P-score is a standardized score with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10. The P-score shows the student's standing compared to other Portland students in the same grade.

2 RIT is the Rasch unit score. The RIT score shows growth on a grade to grade scale (ranging from 140 to 260). The RIT score increases from grade to grade.

Teacher survey results indicate three areas needing clarification for some teachers: 1) 18% of teachers feel test scores are not appropriate or meaningful when communicating with other teachers, 2) 17% of teachers use P-score inappropriately for diagnosis and prescription of instruction, and 3) 20% of teachers feel that test scores are not applicable to instructional goal setting decisions.

Analysis of the principal and teacher surveys by school type, elementary vs middle schools, found no differences in their use of RIT scores and P-scores.

Table 2 presents the distribution of use of PALT and Non-PALT test score information by principals and teachers in Portland Public Schools. Overall, a higher percentage of principals use PALT information than teachers. Both groups rely on PALT evaluation information than non-PALT scores. Overall, principals use RIT scores, while teachers feel more comfortable in using P-scores. Appendix B presents complete frequency tables from the surveys.

TABLE 2.

Frequency of Use of PALT and Non-PALT Test Scores
By Principals and Teachers

DECISION MAKING SITUATION	SCHOOL ROLE	PALT	Non-PALT	N/A	TOTAL N	TOTAL %
Goal setting by class/grade	Principals	82.8		17.2	29	100.0
	Teachers	56.9	26.1	17.1	211	100.1
Initial student placement	Principals	97.1		2.9	34	100.0
	Teachers	77.6	13.2	9.2	228	100.0
Reviewing indiv. student growth	Principals	97.1	2.9		34	100.0
	Teachers	83.0	12.6	4.5	223	100.1
Regrouping students	Principals	87.9	6.1	6.1	34	100.1
	Teachers	67.0	23.4	9.6	218	100.0
Curriculum evaluation	Principals	75.0		25.0	28	100.0
	Teachers	40.3	29.4	30.3	211	100.0
Communicating with parents	Principals	97.1		2.9	34	100.0
	Teachers	92.4	4.9	2.7	225	100.0
Communicating with teachers	Principals	93.5		6.5	34	100.0
	Teachers	74.0	8.2	17.8	208	100.0

Sub-study 3 - Parent Survey

Subjects

In November 1986, 273 parents of students in grade 3-8 completed a survey on their use of PALT student achievement test results. Because surveys were distributed during the Parent-Teacher Conference, the sample was limited to parents who attended the conference and voluntarily completed the ten item questionnaire.

Measure

The Parent Survey (Appendix C) was developed to determine how parents use achievement test data on the Parent Conference Report. Parents were also asked what evaluative information assists them in educational planning. The focus of the instrument was to determine the use and usefulness of the current Parent Conference Report and what revisions would make the report more valuable to parents.

Procedure

The Parent Survey was distributed to parents at the Parent-Teacher Conference. The classroom teacher asked parents to complete the questionnaire and return it. Teachers returned the parent surveys to the researcher in the district mail service (Pony). Questions asked parents for their reactions to the current Parent Conference Report. This survey provided the Evaluation Department with information for revising the parent conference report.

Results

Parent survey results (Appendix C) indicate that 66 parents or 25% of those responding find the current achievement test score information adequate. Of the parents sampled, 55 or 21% want more information on test scores and achievement; another 21% want information on student behavior or attitude on the parent report.

The survey found that 167 parents or 64% want both numeric and graphic summary of PALT test score information on the parent conference report. A third of the parents (N=86) want numeric test

score information; three percent of sample parents want a graphic summary of scores. Currently, test information is presented numerically; parents want scores and graphs to summarize student achievement.

Over 90% of the responding parents (N=240) reported they would like a mailed Spring Parent-Conference Report. Currently, parents receive achievement information only at Fall Parent Conferences.

Parents were asked what test score comparisons they want; 49% of parents (N=134) said they want their child's test scores compared to the class average. Forty-four percent of parents (N=120) want their child's scored compared to the national average. Parents also expressed interest in comparisons to district (38%), state (34%), and school (31%) averages.

Approximately 70% of parents (N=182) use PALT test results to help them make decisions on their child's education or help them learn. Parents gave the following examples of decisions where test scores are used: helping students with homework/study skills; helping improve grades/scores; and participation in TAG/special education.

Sub-study 4 - Grade 3 Testing Program Survey

Subjects

A non-random sample of 77 third grade teachers in 48 schools participated in a telephone survey on the grade 3 testing program.

Measure

A telephone survey (Appendix D) was developed to ask grade 3 teachers for input to improving the testing program. Teacher perceptions of fall/spring grade 3 testing program were studied.

Procedure

A sample of grade 3 teachers were contacted via telephone to participate in the survey. Telephone interviews were completed with 77 grade 3 teachers during a week in January 1987.

Results

The results of the Grade 3 Testing Program survey indicated that teachers wanted the Fall testing program to be similar to Spring testing. Teachers felt that students were able to handle the standard PALT answer sheet. The study set the direction for a grade 3 achievement testing task force and suggested revisions in the grade 3 testing program for Fall 1987. Appendix D presents a summary of the findings from the grade 3 telephone survey.

DISCUSSION

The link between evaluation use and effective educational practice has been well established (Griswold, Cotton, and Hansen, 1985). Our belief is that if evaluative data are used effectively for decision making, there ought to be observable results in improved student performance.

The first year of the decision making study helped us understand how PALT reports are used and the nature of the instructional decision process. It is hoped that the case studies planned for 1987-88 will add to our knowledge, guide reporting system improvements, and improve the quality and use of evaluative data.

The survey findings confirmed our hunches about the need and interest in training teachers and principals in evaluation use and revealed specific target areas for such training. A majority of principals (75%) and teachers (60%) are interested in evaluation inservice and technical assistance (TA). Fifty percent of principals with 1-12 years experience are always/often interested in evaluation training; of principals with 13-25 years experience, 60% are interested in evaluation TA sometimes. On the other hand, teachers, regardless of the years of experience, seem to have a predisposition either for or against data use. At all experience levels, 60% of teachers are interested in evaluation training and 40% would seldom use evaluation TA. Levels of Use data also support this finding. Among the identified users of PALT reports,

32% are mechanical users of evaluation reports. This group needs training in the use and interpretation of test reports.

Direct application of PALT student achievement information for instructional planning was indicated by 91% of the principals and 58% of the teachers. Basically, principals believe that sharing data with teachers helps increase student achievement. After ten years of PALT reporting, the P-score is used more frequently than RIT scores by principals and teachers. This has implications for training. Teachers and test coordinators need additional training and support in the use of RITs. These results provide a basis for Departmental planning of direct services to schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the first year of the Use of Evaluative Data for Instructional Planning and Decision Making study suggest the following recommendations:

1. The R&E Department should revise the Parent Conference Report. Consideration should be given to including both numeric and graphic test score summaries. A revised Parent Guide to understanding test scores should accompany the report.
2. The R&E Department should institute a Spring Parent Conference Report, including fall and spring PALT test scores. The report could be mailed to parents with the Parent Guide to testing.
3. Based on early findings from teacher interviews and surveys, the R&E Department revised the grade 3 testing program. Program implementation and changes should be evaluated.
4. The R&E Department should consider developing training materials/packages to help teachers prepare students for testing. Interviews identified this area as a priority interest of teachers and principals.
5. The R&E Department should consider developing inservice training for test coordinators or others interested in test interpretation and use of test results.

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FOR APPENDICES, PLEASE CONTACT THE AUTHORS.